tribes. This differentiated them clearly from all neighbouring tribes.

B. Ceremonies. A member of a secret society in any of the above towns was accepted as a member in any other one. A person of another tribe, even if known to belong to a comparable society, was treated as an uninitiated person.

C. Origins and Religion. The people of Bella Coola, Talio, and Kimsquit felt themselves to be akin through acceptance of the fact that their ancestors had been created together in the beginning of time. This marked them off with great clearness from all other tribes, especially from the Carriers of the interior. This belief formed a sentimental and religious bond of great strength.

Neighbouring Tribes

It is desirable to describe, briefly, the tribes with which the Bella Coola came in contact.

The Carriers

East of Bella Coola, amid the mountains of the interior, roved the Carriers. In summer they often came down to the river valley to fish or trade for salmon, and in winter they were sometimes forced by cold and starvation again to visit the Bella Coola, Bella Bella, or Rivers Inlet people. There was a good deal of intermarriage between them and the inhabitants of the upper valley, so that the wanderers were able to spend the cold months with relatives. None the less, the Bella Coola considered these people utterly foreign in habits and beliefs, and to call a man a "Carrier" was, and still is, a deadly insult. The Carriers lacked the rich ceremonial life of the coastal peoples who, therefore, regarded them with scorn and contempt. The presence of a few of the much-despised Carriers was, however, almost necessary to the correct performance of the winter dances since they were uninitiated spectators whom it was necessary to impress and delude.

"The Coming of *Awitlemukuin*."[1]

Fifth moon after the summer solstice: *xaxtsil*, "The Time for Racial Dances,"[2] or *Xqaltemain Ai Xiut*, "The Gathering of the Supernatural Beings."

Sixth moon after the summer solstice: *Xiuut*, "Sun Down," that is, when the sun reaches the solstice.

First moon after the winter solstice: *Xwnkaqwaun*, "What Sweeps Away Food," or *Xelkil*, "Angry Moon."

Second moon after the winter solstice: *Alnaxalkwut*, "Facing in Both Directions," that is, half the month belongs to winter and half to summer, or *Lamalx Ai Nuxkikdaq*, "The Festivals of the *Nuxkikdaq*" (I, p. 182).

Third moon after the winter solstice: *Xiuqkun*, "When Herrings Spawn." These fish are said to have arrived on the same day of this moon as the winter solstice in the December one.

Fourth moon after the winter solstice: *Xiljulq*, "Time for Making Salmon Weirs."

Fifth moon after the winter solstice: *Xiuxwxul*, "Time for Making Hand-Nets for Chehen."

Sixth moon after the winter solstice: *Xiuxtul*, "Time for Eating Spring Salmon." It is in this month that the summer solstice occurs.

The chief difficulty experienced by the Bella Coola in computing time rests on the fact that each month is judged by the moon, whereas the main periods of the year depend upon the solstices. One old man, from whom much of this information was obtained, stated that trouble always came at the winter solstice when the month was divided into two sections. The above list is obviously incomplete and incoherent, but it was the best available.

Supernatural Beings

In any primitive community the social, religious, political, and economic aspects of life are so interwoven that they

[1] See vol. II, p. 8 for a description of this mythical being.
[2] See vol. II, chap. I, for a description of these dances.

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cannot be considered as distinct subjects; not only does this present difficulties to the investigator in the field, but it also makes it no easy task to describe the facts so obtained. With many tribes it is possible to deal first with the social life, and later with religion, shamanism, and other associated topics. Such a form of presentation has many advantages and would, if possible, have been followed. Unfortunately, the social organization and rank of the Bella Coola largely depend upon their religious beliefs as expressed in their mythology, and an understanding of at least the main features of these is essential. In this chapter a summary of these has been made, leaving for later description personal relations with the supernatural world and other points which do not profoundly influence the beliefs and practices of the whole community.

Like other peoples, the Bella Coola differ considerably in the fervour of their religious beliefs. But even allowing for individual variation, religious experiences and beliefs are matters of frequent occurrence and profound importance to the great majority of the tribe. The supernatural world is close around them; a sudden thought is caused by the intervention of a supernatural being; the peculiar action of an animal is an occurrence fraught with grave meaning; an unexplained sound always receives a supernatural explanation. The old beliefs survive even among members of the community who are nominal Christians, and those who hold to their ancient religion live in an atmosphere of the supernatural. The white man, whose scientific training and logic lead him to find a natural explanation for an incident, is puzzled and somewhat amused at what he often calls the childish beliefs of the Indian. The Bella Coola, on the other hand, seeing the hand of the supernatural in every untoward event, considers the attitude of the white man in seeking a natural explanation to be almost irreverent. The mental attitude of the Bella Coola to the supernatural does not differ vitally from that of the white man under like conditions; but whereas to white men religious experiences are most unusual, they are common occurrences to

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the Indian. A native convert, for example, finds no difficulty in understanding the Old Testament, for the frequent manifestations of the supernatural are like those to which he has been accustomed. One intelligent Indian went so far as to say that he was a better Christian than any white man because he believed every word in the Old Testament, while he had heard that white men doubted the historical accuracy of some of the stories there recorded.

The following incident illustrates rather clearly the attitude of the Bella Coola towards the supernatural. A few years ago a party, consisting of a number of Indians and one white man, was proceeding by canoe up Dean Channel. On the shore, some distance ahead of them, they saw what seemed to be a grizzly bear with its pelt showing the white sheen so much desired by hunters. Hoping for a shot at the animal, they paddled in behind a long point which offered a hidden means of approach. But as the canoe cautiously rounded the tip, within easy rifle range, all that could be seen was a white water-washed stump, somewhat resembling a bear in shape. To the white man it was obvious that they had all been deceived by this resemblance in the distance, but to the Bella Coola it was equally obvious that the bear had changed into a stump. A bear had been there, they had seen it, now there was a stump: "The bear must have changed itself," they said.

If the reader grasps the mental attitude which explains an optical illusion as a manifestation of the supernatural, he will be able to comprehend the important part played by supernatural beings in the lives of the Bella Coola. Creatures of this type, some anthropomorphic and others zoomorphic, range not only the mountains and forests of British Columbia, but also the waters beneath and the sky above. Their true home is on the flat country above the sky; most of them are merely visitors to this world. Supernatural beings of all kinds are termed *sint*. The attitude of Indians towards them, and their concepts concerning them, can best be understood by the stories in vol. I, chap. x, and vol. II, chap. v. Bella Coola beliefs are

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not systematized; if a man is asked about the powers or functions of a certain supernatural being, he will usually answer by recounting a story in which that being appears. What is known respecting many of the lesser supernatural beings depends upon information contained in stories, and as many of these are personal possessions, it follows that there is tremendous variation in individual knowledge. Psychologically, this is of little importance; there are enough supernatural beings for everyone to know some of them, and to expect to meet or hear them in the forests. To insert many of the stories contained in later chapters would break the sequence of description; all that is here attempted is to give a general summary, in a way foreign to Bella Coola thought.

Supernatural beings are by no means all-powerful. It is true that they have miraculous powers and can work weal or woe to human beings who chance to come in contact with them, but likewise they may sometimes be overwhelmed by mortals armed with objects steeped in human essence, such as a blanket which has been worn until it is impregnated not only with the smell, but the physical being of its owner. In particular, shamans or other mortals of great strength have been able to conquer the supernatural ones. Consequently, it may be said that although supernatural beings live on a plane different from that of mortals, they are not omnipotent. Long, long ago, man was able to come in contact with them more frequently, but that golden age when the semi-mythical ancestors of the Bella Coola were living has long since passed away, though it is only within the last few years that such beings, particularly supernatural animals, have become comparatively rare. The Bella Coola give three main reasons for this:

(1) Supernatural animals do not like the sound of muskets and have moved far away.

(2) With increasing dependence on the canning industry, fewer hunters penetrate into their haunts in the distant parts of the mountains.

(3) The younger Bella Coola no longer take pains to purify themselves as a means of placating supernatural beings.

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rate most of them, are carefully used in accordance with the functions of this supreme deity. As a Bella Coola has many names, corresponding to his membership in various societies, his professional prerogatives, his ancestral myths, and mere nicknames, so has *Alquntăm*, who is a superman, many names, according to his special functions. It would be unthinkable for a Bella Coola to pray to *Alquntăm*, yet it is common for him to pray to *Minakais* or *Tătă*, other names for the same being. The multiplicity of functions and designations approaches the point of obscuring the unity of *Alquntăm*, which in fact, some Bella Coola even deny. They state that *Snuälatla*, *Minakais*, *Smaialotla*, and *Nuxukmälsaix* are one, but that *Alquntăm*, *Snuälkäls*, and *Nonodjonostem* are three distinct supernatural beings. This seeming confusion presents no difficulties to the Indian, since each family has its own myths in which such facts are recorded. He believes these, without questioning those of his neighbour, and it is even possible for an individual to believe two contradictory statements, if he happens to become the owner of two contradictory myths. Evidence collected in the field does not make clear whether the beliefs of the Bella Coola illustrate an incomplete transformation of a single deity into a number of minor ones, or whether they represent the almost complete fusion of a number of beings into one. Following the practice of the great majority of the Bella Coola, the supreme deity will be referred to as *Alquntăm*.

The most obvious attribute of *Alquntăm* is connected with the sun. He can enter it and use it as if it were his canoe. In form he resembles a man, and when he takes charge of the sun it appears as if the latter were a large, self-propelling, radiant boat with windows through which he looks forth. It is said that long ago he allowed mink to take charge of the sun, but the malicious animal ran it so close to earth that the intense heat killed almost all living creatures. When *Alquntăm* enters the sun he wears a cloak, on the lining of which are salmon; reversing this causes the rivers on earth to teem with salmon.

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The religious concepts of the Bella Coola are not limited to explanations of strange apparitions, nor to knowledge of a wide range of supernatural beings, anthropomorphic or zoomorphic. Many in whom they believe are invisible and intangible, though none the less potent. Almost every incident of life is attributed to the help or hindrance of a supernatural agency. If a fisherman constructs a salmon-weir, with a considerable amount of work, the Bella Coola ascribe his success to the assistance of some supernatural being or supernormal power; mere labour would never have sufficed. If a man has phenomenal success in hunting, it is because the supernatural has helped him in some way. It is not necessary that an anthropomorphic being should appear; they seldom do, but none deny that in some form or another supernatural ones have aided the enterprise.

This attitude is clearly evident in Bella Coola beliefs concerning the construction of canoes. Many professions depend upon prerogatives without which a person cannot hope to succeed. This is not true of canoe-makers, although it is a great advantage to one of them if *Yalătimut*, the Master Carpenter, appeared to his ancestors in the beginning of time. Even without this in many cases a man can succeed in making a canoe if he is aided by a supernatural teacher, or Model Maker. No one knows much about this being, nor even whether there is more than one of them, but it is through his kindly intervention that a man is able to complete his complicated task. If carpenters who have left a half-finished canoe in the woods, hear adze beats, as they are returning to it, they remain away from the spot, knowing that their work is being done with superhuman efficiency by a supernatural artisan. Under such circumstances even a solitary man can construct one of the large, ocean-going canoes. About 1880 an expert carpenter, named *Yalaha*, was making

stated definitely that his mother had told him Mackenzie came down the Dean River when her uncle was a young man. As if to confirm this statement he added the inconsequential detail that Mackenzie, in dire straits for food, killed and ate a dog, and that he was given a marmot-skin blanket.

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Raven, blinded by his grief, did not believe him, and responded angrily:

"No, youare not my son. Why do you lie to me? Get out of this house."

Disgusted at this reception, *O'mistimai* obeyed. Just as he was passing through the doorway, Raven noticed the tattoo marks on his legs, and realized that, in spite of the change in his appearance, the visitor was really his son. He called on him to return, but *O'mistimai* paid no attention to his father's entreaties and sped far away. Raven's grief was beyond expression, but he could do nothing to repair the damage he had done. If it had not been for Raven's mistake, all mortals would return to life four days after death.

The above myth is widely known among the Bella Coola, and is supposed to be historically accurate. At the same time, few people allow it to influence their thoughts with regard to death or its causes. It is a fact, but one that belongs to the realm of ancient history rather than to everyday experience. When a Bella Coola dies, his relatives, though they know that his death is due to the folly of Raven, tacitly overlook this, and do not feel bitterly towards Raven. Bella Coola beliefs and theology are not systematized, hence it is quite possible for a person to realize a certain fact, such as the cause of death, and yet disregard it entirely. Considering that absolute contradictions can be believed simultaneously, it is not difficult to picture the mental attitude of people who believe, and at the same time disregard their belief.

One of Raven's spectacular, and at the same time, beneficial exploits was the bringing of sockeye salmon to the Bella Coola River."

In the beginning of time, no sockeye salmon inhabited the rivers, and Raven determined to supply them. First he tried making wooden fish and throwing them into the water, but though he could animate them, they always died after jumping a few times. The reason for his failure, though he did not know it, was because he had omitted the small bone

"This is an example of conflicting beliefs. In addition to assuming that salmon were sent down by *Alquntam* to furnish food for mankind, and that Raven supplied them in the beginning of time, the Bella Coola also believe that they are brought each year both by *Nusiyaam* and *Winwina*.

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CHAPTER XI

MEDICINE, MAGIC, TABOO[1]

Introductory — Causative Medicines — Preventive and Curative Medicines — Sorcerers — Taboos — Ritual Acts — Miscellaneous Beliefs

INTRODUCTORY

THE beliefs described in the last chapter are essentially religious since they display an attitude of respect and often of propitiation to supernatural powers having greater strength than human beings. This is self-evident in the earlier sections and, though less noticeable, is present also in ideas concerning shamans since these men have themselves acquired ability placing them on a plane slightly removed from that of their fellows. Theoretically, it seems as if a clear division might be drawn between the concepts just recorded, and others of a magical nature in which, although the element of contact with the supernatural is present, yet the end desired is obtained by the mere performance of an action. To the Bella Coola there is a slight overlap between the two types. For example, the acquisition of an object from which supernatural good fortune may be secured is religious, but its use is virtually magical since once obtained, neither supplication nor further favours are necessary. Nevertheless, it is possible to separate most magical beliefs from most religious ones, though it must be emphasized that the cleavage is less distinct to the native than it appears to the white man.

If it is difficult to find a clear dividing-line between religion and magic, it is impossible to draw one between the latter and

[1] The late Harlan I. Smith has dealt with certain aspects of the subjects treated in this chapter in two articles: "Sympathetic Magic and Witchcraft among the Bella-coola." (*American Anthropologist*, vol. 27, no. 1, Jan.-March, 1925, pp. 116-121) and "Materia Medica of the Bella Coola and Neighbouring Tribes of British Columbia" National Museum of Canada, Annual Report for 1927, Bulletin 56, pp. 47-68).

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and those who have knowledge of them are sorcerers. Even a man of this kind is not outside the pale of society unless he practises indiscriminately; members of the *kusiut* society, for example, frequently employ one to kill an individual who has offended against their regulations (I, p. 740). A man is regarded as a sorcerer not on account of his knowledge but on account of the ends to which he applies it.

Closely related to, if not identical with, the belief that certain consequences follow certain acts, is the conviction that the infraction of ritual prohibitions brings disaster. There are many such taboos, for so they may be called. Though most important at the critical periods of life, puberty, pregnancy, while observing ceremonial chastity, and so forth, there are many which must be obeyed at all times.

Restrictions pertaining to the river and regulations at birth and death have already been described. Like magical acts, these often verge on the religious owing to the belief that disregard offends supernatural beings. On the whole, however, it seems as if most infractions bring their own punishment without intervention of higher powers, a concept which throws taboos into the category of magic rather than of religion, with the ever-present proviso that the two cannot be separated entirely from one another. With them may be associated a number of ritual acts connected with fishing and hunting in which, though the element of propitiation is not absent, it is satisfied by the performance of definite rites. Finally, there have been included in this chapter a number of unimportant beliefs, the psychology of which cannot be analysed.

What is the basis of these rites defined as Medicine, Magic, and Taboo? As already described, the Bella Coola either do not explain their origin and function, or merely state that *Älquntäm* is responsible, as he is for every activity of life. This is unsatisfactory because many which, viewed scientifically, have neither curative nor causative power, produce the desired end. A child who has been "made" a carpenter during infancy, usually grows up to be proficient in that profession; the person

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154 who has been "cured" of an illness, recovers; the man whose
•791 death has been "caused" by magic, dies. An average white
789 man would consider such statements to be erroneous, but they not only figure in stories and beliefs, but some of them have been actually observed by the writer. The explanation lies in the susceptibility of the Bella Coola to suggestion. The conviction that he is to die so weakens a man that death often results; belief that he is to recover, aids a sick person to throw off the malady. This sentiment, intelligible in case of disease, is equally applicable in other matters. The child who has been [868] endowed with carpentry skill grows up with the conviction to assist his labours. Moreover, his relatives and friends are also aware of it, and he receives every opportunity to practise, so that the outcome desired is often the consequence of the act. 789 Though the Bella Coola do not appreciate that psychological 828 and sociological factors may be the real cause of the result, they realize the importance of the power of thought. For [771] example, if a group of people is unanimous in wishing some end, or expects some event to happen, it is believed that their thoughts are strong enough to bring about its occurrence. The following examples illustrate this point:

It is said that when the white man first came to British Columbia, a tribe of Indians was living in a secluded valley, far to the south. As more and more settlers arrived, the occupants were driven from their homes and forced into the barren [787] mountains. One night, *Ałquntām* came in a vision to one of the natives, saying:

"I see what you desire; you want the white men to withdraw. You, yourself, are helpless. But if all your fellows wish the same, the white men will depart."

The man told all his friends and they agreed to concentrate the next night on their wish to expel the white man. A few failed to do so, and nothing happened. The second night there was the same lack of unanimity. The desire to drive away the intruders grew stronger in course of time, until one night this was the centre of the thoughts of all; next morning the white

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754 961 789 828 [622] would probably fall a victim. He became ill in May, 1923, and, though treated by a white doctor, grew steadily worse until he died in the latter part of June, three weeks after the year had elapsed. All the Bella Coola firmly believe that this was due to the power of thought. The father of the woman was a powerful chief whose thoughts were accordingly potent, and some consider that his concentrated desires and expectations were enough to kill the accused, while others believe that his expressed statements convinced others of the result, and that it was their combined thought that caused the death. It usually requires the thoughts of more than one individual to lead to this effect. The doctor who attended this man stated that his patient had shown symptoms of melancholy and resignation during his last sickness; it seems clear that the expectation of death must have lessened his chance of recovery.

771 954 828 [538] A prominent theme in Bella Coola folk-lore is the belief that a person cannot long survive who has made himself unpopular. It is sometimes stated that a magical means was employed to remove him, and this was no doubt often the case; a person who learns that a "medicine" had been employed to kill him is in no fit mental condition to counteract the power of suggestion, particularly if he knows that others are aware of what has been done. His death is regarded as proof of the efficacy of the means employed and the belief of others grows stronger. As already stated, this conviction still survives. When this ethnological investigation was being conducted, a [648] point under discussion was whether or not the Kimsquit people should be allowed to live in Bella Coola. One chief took the lead in objecting and everyone expected that, having thus roused the ire of would-be immigrants, he would die. He did so soon afterwards, and it is universally believed that it was caused by the concentration of the hostile thoughts of the Kimsquit. Similarly, the potency of taboos is increased by the fact that since [784] time immemorial the thoughts of everyone have been opposed to any infraction. Consequently, an offender is liable to punishment both for breaking an injunction and because he

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has gone contrary to something about which there has been universal agreement for generations.

To understand Bella Coola medicines it is, therefore, necessary to regard them as concepts deep rooted in tribal history, and made potent by the suggestibility of those who practise them. This can be most clearly illustrated with regard to those effecting death, but is equally true with regard to all medicines, whether curative or causative.

There remain for consideration the sociological aspects of medicines. Knowledge of most remedies has been handed down for generations as the property of ancestral families. Some are acquainted with one or two "cures," some with many, and some with none at all. The name of the discoverer of a particular medicine is usually lost in antiquity, though it is often attributed to someone described in the family's myth. Like other possessions based on mythology, a remedy of this type can be practised by any member of the group to which it belongs. If it is observed that a certain individual is using one of these successfully, others will ask him to apply it for them. Payment is always expected, but the sum varies enormously, depending upon the efficacy of the remedy, the difficulty of operation, the generosity of the person benefited, and so many diverse factors that no general conclusions can be made. A patient may observe the details of the treatment, but unless he is entitled to it, he would never dream of using it himself. This is due not only to honesty, but to the conviction that only a person with the inherited right to a certain cure can perform it successfully. Rarely, such knowledge is sold or given away outright, but, like other possessions of an ancestral family, this usually leads to friction and jealousy on the part of those overlooked. Some of the simple herbal remedies are common knowledge and are used by all, since remembrance of their ownership, if it ever existed, has been lost. At the present time it is difficult to learn details of proprietorship of some medicines, but these are indicated whenever possible.

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789 856 ceremonial dances without making mistakes. The Bella Bella paint a representation of a wolf's bladder for the same purpose.

[532] [826] [825] The basis of this medicine is the belief that it is the gall-bladder which causes wildness and intelligent fear, and hence that anyone so treated will be careful not to make mistakes. A bird with a large bladder is thought to be difficult to approach, whereas a deer, which has a small one, or none at all, is often stupidly brave. This medicine is known only to the members of certain families and is used for the children of chiefs alone, since errors on the part of others is a matter of little importance.

[424] [622]

MEDICINES OF CHILDHOOD

789 856 771 Some of the instruction given to boys and girls, and the acts which they are enjoined to perform, are virtually religious, and have accordingly been described in earlier chapters. For example, when a lad washes in the river before daybreak, scours himself with a smooth stone and prays to *Älquntäm*, he is carrying out what might with justice be called a religious act. If, however, he believes that mere wishing is enough to compel some desire or end, it is magical. Different Bella Coola have different sentiments concerning the exact means by which this method causes the desired effect. To some it is unquestionably a true prayer, but in other families it is customary for a father to take his son, when he has reached about eight years of age, and wash him four times, to the accompaniment of the usual prayer. It is believed that this causes the lad to grow up powerful and active, constantly striving for success. This type of washing may be called magical.

789 856 In the following there is no element of uncertainty; they belong unquestionably to the category described in the preceding section.

To Cause Agility

The following medicine is frequently employed by fathers when their sons are first able to walk:

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been displayed in their customs and beliefs, their habits, practices, and folk-lore, their outlook both towards the supernatural world and towards their fellows.

The following additional observations are the result of personal knowledge, and recorded after considerable thought.

When a white man begins to understand the Bella Coola, he cannot fail to be impressed by their deep belief in the supernatural. To them religion is no mental abstraction, but a living reality. They feel the presence of strange creatures around them, and they recognize non-human powers in every manifestation of their own minds; in fact, every incident, good or bad, is attributed to supernatural intervention. This does not mean that they regard life with stoic indifference, content to murmur *Kismet* at whatever fate befalls them. They realize that supernatural powers have endowed them with brains, with physical strength, and with the ability to win favour and gain help from active superhuman beings, and consequently they strive in a world teeming with potent forces. The individual toils as does a white man in the struggle of life, but he attributes his fortune, not to luck or to his unaided exertions, but to the assistance of non-human agents. If he is fortunate, it is because his spirit has been active; if unfortunate, because it has been too inert to protect him.

Contact with white men, particularly with missionaries, has raised tremendous problems for the Bella Coola. The older people have been but little affected; they may state that they are Christians, believing in the white man's god, but this often means only the knowledge of one more supernatural being whom they add to the already rich pantheon. It is quite otherwise with the younger people, particularly with those who have been away at school. Some adopt the new faith with fervour, continuing to see the same visions and to experience the same mental exaltations, but attributing them to Christianity. To others, however, loss of belief in their own faith has caused a general scepticism; though they may accept the new religion, it does not become the vital force which the old was to their

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177 fathers. Inherited beliefs are too deep-rooted to pass away
771 entirely within a few generations. Even those who claim to
[181] have adopted the new faith remain convinced of the potency of magic, and of the existence of those supernatural creatures which do not actively conflict with the white man's creed. Such lack of consistency is a world-wide trait, particularly intelligible among the Bella Coola whose philosophy abounds in contradictions, dependent upon statements handed down in the origin myths of different families.

626 The Bella Coola are constrained not only by the omni-
[181] presence of supernatural beings; they are constantly subjected to the influence of their fellows. They are far less individual-
[622] istic than white people. A chief may boast that he can do as he pleases, that he can disregard the restrictions of lesser men; he often does so, but only because public opinion recognizes that he has reached a position of eminence by giving many
[703] potlatches. The duly validated warrior is brave because he feels that everyone is aware of his valour. The man who per-
[769] forms some ceremony in accordance with an ancestral myth incorporates himself with his forbears, and is strengthened by the conviction that he has gained their support and approbation. In every phase of life, a person is profoundly affected
177 by the approval or disapproval of his neighbours. At present
626 the construction of small houses, each occupied by a single
342 family, makes it possible for a man to hide himself, or to do work unknown to the rest of the community. This lessens the force of public opinion, although it is even now more potent than conscience in checking anti-social acts. Formerly, in communal houses, every action was fully known, making individual freedom of thought and act virtually impossible. A man
[602] is chiefly influenced by his relatives who take a great share in what the white man would consider purely family affairs. The effect of the group upon the individual must not be overlooked, nor can it be over-stressed in a study of these people.

177 The education and conversion of the younger men have
626 enormously lessened their reliance upon their fellows. In former
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577 edly until complete confidence was established, simplifying
[124] work in the field to an enormous extent. Equal trust could be placed on these men in other respects; articles of value were repeatedly left in their houses with the absolute certainty that they would be guarded with care. Some few individuals there were, however, who were neither honest nor trustworthy.
[177] Bella Coola religion is not concerned with ethics, but public
626 opinion demands honour in dealing with relatives or friends.
577 In former times, for example, debts incurred by an individual
[426] were considered a liability by his relations. If a man died after
[602] buying goods on credit for a potlatch, his family were disgraced
[177] if they failed to pay his bills; now, unfortunately, nothing constrains the younger people, many of whom try to avoid settling even their own debts, much less those of dead relatives. Individual conscience has not replaced the tribal and, more specifically, family influence. Dishonesty in small matters is not
[648] uncommon, particularly in dealing with white people who,
[177] according to the Bella Coola, were the first to transgress. The older people bitterly lament the lack of morality of the younger and state, probably with entire justification, that they would have been prevented by the open life which prevailed when several families shared a single house. On the whole, however, the average Bella Coola is probably no less honest than the average white man.

153 Individuals vary enormously in mental ability. In making
124 this investigation, it was necessary to interview all the older people of the tribe. Disregarding those unwilling to provide information, it was found that some absolutely lacked the ability to explain matters with which they were familiar; some did not have sufficient patience to be good teachers; some were so forgetful that they would omit necessary points in a story or account; some were downright stupid, whereas others displayed mental ability of no mean order. In reading ethnological literature, one is apt to think of the troubles experienced by the author, and to overlook the fact that natives have as

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

to their forefathers. Profound as these material changes have been, those of a psychological nature have been even more important. New worlds have been thrown open to them, stimulating ideas have been brought to their attention, and they have realized for the first time that the world is infinitely larger than they had imagined. Hand in hand with this extension of knowledge has gone disbelief in their own ancient lore. The white man, whose superiority and mechanical skill they admit, positively denies the actuality of their mythology, and laughs at the dramatic performances which were wont to fill the winter with engrossing interest. Such rites can flourish only in an attitude of profound belief: this has been so shaken that the dances continue listlessly, a mere shadow of a once living art. The young people were the first to embrace a scepticism that has rapidly grown into disbelief of the faith of their ancestors, and a half-concealed scorn for their elders, the upholders of the old customs. Worst of all, prohibition of the potlatch has made it impossible for a man to reach a position of social eminence. Moreover, since the holding of any type of ceremonial requires a distribution of gifts, formal gatherings of all kinds have become virtually impossible; even marriages have no longer the social support that formerly made them so lasting.

These cumulative blows would be enough to shake any civilization, and that of the Bella Coola has been entirely unable to adjust itself to the new conditions. The young people, having lost respect for their elders, are deprived of the advice and support essential to the continuity of culture. They ape the white man's dress; they want his mechanical devices, but have failed to assimilate them. For example, a gramophone in a Bella Coola house is an anachronism, while several similar articles spoil the old picture but do not provide a new one. Seeking to copy the new ways thrown open to them, they have achieved the outward show but not the substance, and in so doing have destroyed their own culture. In the old days they were ambitious to hold potlatches and willing to work steadily towards that goal; now, new desires have not kept pace with

6:Boas E-5 (1886-ca. 1890)1892
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

751 Women wear tight Anklets to prevent
the calves of their legs from slipping down.' During their monthly
481 periods women place soft cedar-bark in the vagina. The bark is afterwards
824 burnt in the woods. The smoke of this fire is believed to be poisonous.

177 It is evident that the culture of the Bilqula is very greatly influenced
551 by that of the Kwakiutl. The secret societies and the potlatch ceremonies
556 are almost a copy of those of the Hēiltsuk. This influence has been so
575 deep that names of even deities and of the mythical ancestors of certain
776 gentes are purely Kwakiutl words, or have at least Kwakiutl endings. Thus
771 the name Aiamk!'ikya (see p. 413) is purely Kwakiutl, meaning 'good all
over the world.' K'ūmk'umk!'ikya is also a Kwakiutl word, meaning
'the rich one of the world.' The chief's name, Ma'lakyilatl (see p. 409)
belongs to the same class of Kwakiutl names. On the other hand, the
religious ideas of the Bilqula are very curiously developed, and apparently
but slightly influenced by their neighbours. The whole Masmasalā'niq
tradition is peculiar to them, but has been partly adopted by the Awiky'-
ā'nuq, with whom the Bilqula have intermarried.

[pp. 425-449 not processed]